MEMORIAL COLUMN - ASTORIA, OREGON

The Memorial Column at Astoria, Oregon, erected in 1926 by the Great Northern Railway Company, through the generosity of Vincent Astor of New York and through the cooperation of the former company, marks the location at the mouth of the Columbia River of the discovery of the river by Robert Gray in 1792, the western terminus of Lewis and Clark's journey in 1805, and the establishment of Fort Astoria by John Jacob Astor in 1811.

It has been erected in John Jacob Astor Park, on Coxcomb Hill, the highest point in the vicinity of Astoria. Coxcomb Hill is partially covered with second-growth timber, which unfortunately obstructs the view of the column from the business section of the city. From the Youngs Bay and Warrenton sides the entire column is plainly visible. The elevation of its base is 640 ft. Observation platform 110 ft. Total height 750 ft. above the city.

The entire column is constructed of reinforced concrete. Its base above the ground is 19'6" square and 13'6" high, upon which rests the barrel portion of column, which is 13'6" in diameter at the bottom and tapering to 11'4" in diameter at the top. Total height of barrel 94'6". On top of this barrel section a square observation platform has been constructed. This observation platform is reached by a steel spiral stairway inside of column. The barrel section carries the sgraffito decorations. Carved in the base will be the names and a brief history of the accomplishment of Robert Gray, Lewis and Clark and John Jacob Astor.

A pictured story of the discovery, exploration and settlement of the Columbia River is depicted on a spiral ribbon which wraps around the column from the bottom to the top. The ribbon, if developed on a plain surface, would be 7'9" high and 530 ft. long. Between the spiral strip

of picture is a 9" dark band which carries a lettered description of the scene.

Sgraffito is an old Italian art. Its effect is very similar to an etching. It is plastic Portland cement when applied. The effect is produced by the application of a dark chocolate coat of plastic cement covered with a brush coat of tan colored cement paint. Then the artist, with steel tools, scratches away the tan outer coat to expose the chocolate colored undercoat. The process produces a beautiful picture of a general golden color. The picture is permanent and the color fast. The design is by Electus D. Litchfield of New York, Architect, and the pictured story is by Attillia Pusterla of New York, Artist. Mr. Pusterla has modernized and developed the ancient sgraffito art to a point where it is possible to apply it to a structure of such large scale as the memorial column.

The column faces almost west. The line of its principal axis produced west would extend across Youngs Bay, over the town of Warrenton, over Clatsop spit to the Pacific Ocean.

A panorama from the platform atop the column shows four snow-capped mountains in the Cascade Range; the Coast Range and Saddle Mountain; Youngs Bay and river; the Lewis & Clark River; site of Fort Clatsop; state highway to Seaside; Clatsop spit; north and south jetties; Cape Disappointment; Pacific County, Washington; and the bay and Columbia River.

Following is a brief description of the historical story told on the column. All the principal portraits and plaques are on the west face, facing the Pacific Ocean. Starting at the bottom, captions as they appear

on the ribbon between the pictures will be given, followed by a brief description of the scene.

"BEFORE THE WHITE MAN CAME"

This is a forest scene in its natural state, showing beaver, wolf and deer.

"ROBERT GRAY IN THE SHIP 'COLUMBIA' IN THE GREAT RIVER OF THE WEST, MAY 11th, 1792"

Center is a picture of the ship "Columbia" at anchor in the bay, surrounded by Indian canoes. Background shows Washington shore. To left of ship Indians are shown on shore in an excited state at the sight of this strange ship.

"GRAY FINDS INDIAN VILLAGE ON THE BANK OF THE RIVER"

Gray, with men from ship, and Indians, are shown on land inspecting a village built of boards and logs. Indian activity, such as drying skins and fish, can be seen in the foreground. In the middle of this scene, which is a portrait of Robert Gray with his name and the date 1792.

"LIEUTENANT BROUGHTON NAMES MT.HOOD, OCTOBER,1792"

Background is Mt. Hood. Foreground, Columbia River with two of Broughton's long boats, propelled by oars and filled with men, followed by Indian canoes propelled by paddles and filled with Indians.

"THE LEWIS AND CLARK EXPEDITION CROSSING THE MOUNTAINS"

On the left is a mountain scene with the party on a march. It is led by Sacagawea riding a horse, her papoose shown over her right shoulder. The party is on foot leading pack horses. In the center is a group of three portraits of Pres. Jefferson, Lewis and Clark.

"INDIANS GREET THE EXPLORERS"

On the right is a scene of Lewis or Clark standing in bow of an Indian bateau manned by their own men, about to land for conference with Indians standing on shore.

"LEWIS AND CLARK REACH THE PACIFIC"
"THEY OBTAIN SALT BY BOILING SEA WATER"

Both captions are under a scene at Seaside showing a long furnace with kettles of boiling water. Men are about tending fires and carrying water. Pacific Ocean in background.

"FORT CLATSOP ESTABLISHED, DECEMBER,1805"

Lewis and Clark party building Fort Clatsop. Shows partially completed stockade and two cabins. Others are carrying in venison or elk meat.

"FORT CLATSOP IS COMPLETED"
"INDIAN FISHING AND BOAT BUILDING INDUSTRY"

Both captions are under this scene, showing to the left the completed stockade. Indians in center building bateau for return journey, and to the right curing and packing fish. Some members of the party shown about the fort.

"ASTOR OVERLAND PARTY LEAVING ST. LOUIS"
"TONQUIN SAILS FROM NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 8,1810"

Center foreground is a large portrait of John Jacob Astor with his name. Center background is the Castle Garden end of Manhattan Island. To the right is the Tonquin. She has just lifted anchor and is under way. On shore is a small group bidding her farewell. To the left four large bateau filled with men and goods leaving St. Louis on the start of the overland journey.

"TONQUIN ARRIVES AT MOUTH OF COLUMBIA, SPRING OF 1811"
"BUILDING FORT ASTORIA"

To the right the Tonquin is shown at anchor discharging supplies and equipment. To the left members of the party are building Fort Astoria.

"OVERLANDERS CROSS THE DIVIDE LED BY WILSON PRICE HUNT"

This is a mountain scene in the dead of winter of 1812. Overlanders are on foot, making their way through heavy snow under distressing conditions. Some are being assisted by other members of the party. The only horse shown is being ridden by Pierre Dorion's wife and her small children.

"DESTRUCTION OF THE TONQUIN, SUMMER OF 1811"

Center shows the Tonquin being blown up in the harbor of Clayoquot on the western shore of Vancouver Island.

FIRST OVERLAND ASTORIANS ARRIVE

The arrival of the main party at Fort Astoria. The scene is one of joy, men are hugging each other, guns are being fired and the American flag is flying in a strong breeze.

"TRANSFER OF FORT ASTORIA TO THE NORTHWEST COMPANY, OCTOBER, 1813"

Center shows bill of sale of Fort Astoria to North West Co. To the right a British sailor has just lowered the American flag and is shown raising the British flag. The scene at the fort is of the British changing the name to Fort George.

"UNITED STATES SHIP 'ONTARIO' RAISES AMERICAN FLAG, 1818"

Center is picture of U. S. sloop of war "Ontario". To right American commissioners have presented President Monroe's demands. The British have surrendered the fort; the name is changed again to Astoria and the American flag is being raised.

"COMING OF THE PIONEERS - 1841-1848"

To the left is shown a covered wagon scene depicting the coming of the pioneers.

Center is a large seal of the State of Oregon.

"THE RAILWAY ARRIVES - 1893"

This shows a modern railway train, which was made possible by the foresight, ability and courage of Gray, Lewis and Clark, and John Jacob Astor.